

VZCZCXYZ0003
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTC #0295 0471206
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 161206Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8217
INFO RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0179

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000295

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/16/2017

TAGS: [PINR](#) [HU](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: BALKENENDE BLOG: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

REF: STATE 6376

Classified By: COUNSELOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS ANDREW J. SCHOF...

97040,2/16/2007 12:06,07THEHAGUE295,"Embassy The Hague",CONFIDENTIAL,07STATE6376,"VZCZCXYZ0003
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTC #0295 0471206
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 161206Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8217
INFO RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0179
", "C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000295

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/16/2017

TAGS: [PINR](#) [HU](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: BALKENENDE BLOG: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

REF: STATE 6376

Classified By: COUNSELOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS ANDREW J. SCHOFER. REASON: 1.4(C).

11. (C) This message is a response to reftel request for information on Dutch Prime Minister Balkenende's Weblog by Washington Analysts and the Open Source Center (OSC).

12. (C) Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende maintained a weblog (blog) -- www.janpeterbalkenende.nl -- during the recent Dutch Parliamentary election campaign. The first entry is dated October 2, 2006, and the last is dated November 23, 2006, i.e. the day after the elections. There have been no subsequent entries, and post is not aware of any plans to revive the blog at this time.

13. (C) Balkenende was one of several party leaders who set up blogs during the election in an effort to reach out to new potential voters, especially among youth. Some senior Dutch government officials, including outgoing Finance Minister Zalm and outgoing Defense Minister Kamp, and about a dozen members of Parliament, also maintain regular weblogs between elections and use them to comment on current affairs. Balkenende has not done so. however.

14. (C) Most of the entries in Balkenende's blog were short, peppy, and focused on familiar CDA campaign themes. While post does not know for certain who drafted the entries, the language and subject matter was consistent with Balkenende's personal style, and we have no reason to believe that he did not write them himself. Reactions were posted on the blog and appear to have been only minimally filtered, if at all. Most reactions were positive and many offered "advice" on campaign strategy and how Balkenende should approach coalition formation talks.

15. (C) Balkenende's entries made little mention of his home life, which is not unusual for politicians in the Netherlands. His relative openness in writing about his own experiences on the campaign trail, however, were seen as ""humanizing"" him and probably added to his popularity. Dutch media reported early in the campaign on the establishment of Balkenende's blog -- along with those of his political rivals -- but the blog itself does not appear to have been a major source of reportable material during the campaign.
BLAKEMAN